

Table 1 lists 17 species that have similar global ranges to Bar-winged Wren Babbler, and which therefore could conceivably be resident in the Hoang Lien Mountains. All these species are resident in the eastern Himalayas of north-east India, northern Myanmar, and Yunnan and Sichuan provinces of China. Species only rarely recorded in northern Myanmar (e.g. Rufous-breasted Accentor *Prunella strophciata*) are excluded, as are those that do not occur in Sichuan (e.g. Grey-sided Laughingthrush *Garrulax caeruleus* and Cachar Wedge-billed Babbler *Sphenocichla roberti*), although of course such species might also conceivably occur in Vietnam. Similarly, species that share a similar distribution to another rare Fan Si Pan resident—Red-winged Laughingthrush *Garrulax formosus*—but currently only occur in Sichuan and Yunnan are excluded, because they do not occur in north-east India and northern Myanmar. Also excluded are species that would probably only occur in Vietnam in the non-breeding season, such as Fire-capped Tit *Cephalopyrus flammiceps*.

We believe that with sufficient survey effort, some of our 17 listed species will be found. Most of them are regarded as uncommon within their core range (Robson 2008) and, therefore, could have escaped notice in the poorly surveyed Hoang Lien Mountains. Those dependent on high-altitude coniferous forest, such as Spotted Nutcracker *Nucifraga caryocatactes*, Bar-tailed Treecreeper *Certhia himalayana* and the three *Parus* tits, may be least likely to occur. Two other species, Green Shrike-babbler *Pteruthius xanthochlorus* and Indian Blue Robin *Luscinia brunnea*, also seem unlikely to occur since they are considered common within their ranges, and might therefore be expected to have been recorded already. By contrast, low-density species can easily be missed and we urge greater attention be directed at this neglected but important area of Indochina.

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**Simon P. MAHOOD**, Wildlife Conservation Society Cambodia Programme, House 21, Street 21, Sangkat Tonle Bassac, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Email: s.mahood@wscscambodia.org

**David P. EDWARDS**, Centre for Tropical Environmental and Sustainability Science (TESS) and School of Marine and Tropical Biology, James Cook University, Cairns, Smithfield, Queensland 4878, Australia. Email: dave.edwards@jcu.edu.au

**Felicity A. EDWARDS**, Institute of Integrative and Comparative Biology, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT, United Kingdom

## Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* and Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis*: two new birds for Sichuan, with a review of their distribution in China

ZHU LEI, ZHANG JUN, QIU JING, WEI QIAN, DONG LEI & SUN YUE-HUA

### Long-tailed Duck

One Long-tailed Duck in non-breeding plumage was seen by J. Zhang at Yazihe Reserve, Guanghan, on 31 January 2006 around 14h00. This individual was found in mixed group with Common Coots *Fulica atra* and Ferruginous Pochards *Aythya nyroca* on the river surface near the Chengdu to Mianyang highway bridge.

Long-tailed Duck is a distinctive small diving duck. Although the individual found at Yazihe lacked the typical long tail for an adult male, the white forehead and black patch around the neck as well as mostly white breast revealed this to be a young male in its winter plumage (MacKinnon & Phillipps 2000). This species is widespread in the Holarctic, breeding mainly above the Arctic Circle (Zhao 1995). In eastern Asia its wintering range extends from the northern Bering Sea on pack-ice south along coasts, commonly to

northern Japan, rarely to the Korea Peninsula and very rarely in eastern China (Brazil 2009).

La Touche (1934) reported his specimen collection of Long-tailed Ducks from Chinwangtao, east Chihli (now Qinhuangdao, Hebei) and Foochow (now Fuzhou, Fujian). He also stated that the scarcity of records of this species was probably due to lack of observation (La Touche 1934). Shaw (1936) reported his collection from Xin'an, Hopei (now An'xin, Hebei). Guan *et al.* (1963) reported a specimen found at Dongting Lake, Hunan, in December 1959, which turned out to be the first record for the province. Cheng (1987) evaluated this species's status as very rare in China, being a migrant known to occur in Heilongjiang and Lushun, Liaoning. Han *et al.* (1994) reported an observation of wintering Long-tailed Ducks at Dalian Bay during surveys from 13 to 15 January in 1990. On 28 February 2010, two



**Figure 1.** Long-tailed Duck *Clangula hyemalis* at Yazihe Reserve, Guanghan. (Photo by Zhang Jun)

females in non-breeding plumage were seen around Cheniushan Island, near the coast of Lianyungang, Jiangsu, which adds an additional record to the eastern China coastal area (Lu *et al.* 2010).

Records of Long-tailed Duck from inland China are much rarer. Li (1996) published a checklist of waterbirds of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau wetlands which includes this species but without details of when and where. Holt (2008) noted an observation of a female near Golmud, Qinghai, on 19–29 November 1991, by J. Hornskov. Zhao (2008) and Li (2009) reported the Long-tailed Duck in their dissertations, which focused on waterbird studies in Inner Mongolia and Gansu respectively. Table 1 details records of this duck from all over China.

### Red-breasted Goose

J. Qiu and his companion observed one adult Red-breasted Goose on 3 January 2011 at about 12h00 on the Yazihe river, just near the famous archaeological site of Sanxingdui, Guanghan. At times it associated with a small flock of 30 wintering Ruddy Shelducks *Tadorna ferruginea*, but usually foraged on the riverbank alone. J. Zhang, Q. Wei and L. Zhu observed it on 16 February 2011, and considered it in good condition. The goose and Ruddy Shelducks occasionally chased each other. The last sighting was on 22 February (ZJ). It could not be found on 2 and 5 March (Zhao Y. D. and Song Y. pers. comm.). The Red-breasted Goose has a highly distinctive plumage, and is slightly smaller than Ruddy Shelduck (Zhao 1995, pers. obs.). The adult only shows two distinct white bars on the closed wing, while a juvenile bird usually has 4–5 instead (Svensson *et al.* 2009). Accordingly, we considered the individual adult.

The breeding area of this goose is up into the Arctic tundra of Russia, between 67°N and 76°N, and between 67°E and 116°E, with the majority of the population nesting on the Taimyr, Yamal and Gydan peninsulas to the east of the Ural Mountains (Cranswick *et al.* 2010). The main winter range lies along the Black Sea coast of western Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria, with just five sites holding 90% of the wintering population of the species (Cranswick *et al.* 2010). There was no record of this goose in China prior to 1960, when Cheng reported a juvenile bird collected from Dongting Lake on 15 January in Hunan (Cheng 1960). After that records remained scarce. In 1992, Liu Y. Z. photographed an individual in Poyang Lake, perhaps the first record from Jiangxi (Shi 2000). A survey from January 1991 to January 1992 at the Dongting Lake wetlands did not find Red-breasted Goose (Liu *et al.* 1995). Similarly, a thorough survey from May 1996 to July 2003, which focused on rare, endangered and nationally protected waterbirds in Hubei, failed to provide any new information on this species. In Wetland International's Asian Waterbird Census, from 1987 to 2007, only one individual was recorded in 2004 at Poyang Lake (Li *et al.* 2009).

Zhong (2007) reported one record in the Dongting Lake wetlands, the most recent from this site. There were two records of six individuals in total found in 2005 and 2006 respectively at Poyang Lake (Xu *et al.* 2009). Since 2007, records of Red-breasted Goose in China have been increasing, very likely because of raised observer awareness (see Table 2 for details).

### Discussion

Newton (2008) defined vagrant or accidental as 'a bird seen outside its regular range and migration route'. Both of the Long-tailed Duck and Red-breasted Goose records in Sichuan fit this definition, but the accumulating evidence suggests that both species may now be too frequently encountered to be considered vagrants in China.

Long-tailed Duck, with two independent observations within only c.16 km in January 2006 and December 2007, as well as one sighting of two individuals in Mianyang in February 2008, plus the latest record from Dayi, Chengdu, in February 2010 (see Table 1), may now prove to be a very rare but regular winter visitor to Sichuan.

Records in Table 2 indicate that the Red-breasted Goose has occurred almost annually in China since 2004, mainly in the lower Yangtze River wetlands. At the IOZ, Beijing, we discovered one adult specimen of this goose (no. 38022) not previously mentioned by any authors. According to the label, it was collected at Yueyang, Hunan, in January 1960. Guan *et al.* (1963) reported survey results of wintering waterfowl in southern China from December 1959 to January 1960 and October 1961 to February 1962, and they only found the goose at Dongting Lake, Yueyang, Hunan, the site which provided the juvenile specimen (IOZ no. 38021) mentioned by Cheng

**Figure 2.** Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis* flanked by Ruddy Shelducks *Tadorna ferruginea* in Yazihe Reserve, Guanghan. (Photo by Dong Lei)



**Table 1.** Records of Long-tailed Ducks *Clangula hyemalis* in China

Site	Location	Elevation (m)	Date	Number/Gender	Source
Qinhuangdao, HB	?	?	5–6 April 1916	1 juv M, 1 F	La Touche 1934 *
Fuzhou, FJ	?	?	November 1918	1 F	La Touche 1934 *
Baiyangdian Lake, An'xin, HB	38°50'N 115°50'E	0	10 December 1934	1 M	Shaw 1936 *; No. 495 **
Dongting Lake, HuN	29°18'N 112°59'E	15	December 1959	?	Guan <i>et al.</i> 1963 *
Dawangjia Island, Changhai, LN	39°25'N–39°36'N 122°55'E–123°06'E	0	13–15 January 1990	2,480	Han <i>et al.</i> 1994
Golmud, QH	36°24'N 94°54'E	2,823	19–29 November 1991	1 F	Holt 2008
Beidagang Reservoir, TJ	38°45'N 117°23'E	0	November 1998	?	Zhang <i>et al.</i> 2004 *
Beidagang Reservoir, TJ	38°45'N 117°23'E	0	April 1999	?	<i>ditto</i>
Summer Palace Park, BJ	39°59'N 116°15'E	49	28 March 2004	1 M	Liu & Zhang 2005 *
Yellow River Reserve, HN	34°51'N 112°38'E	113	1 January 2005	2 F	Niu 2007 *
Mangrove Reserve, SZ, GD	22°30'N 114°01'E	0	23 January 2006	1	CBR 2006, 2007 *
Yazihe Reserve, Guanghan, SC	30°58'N 104°18'E	460	31 January 2006	1 juv	Zhang J., pers. obs. *
Sailimu Lake, XJ	44°35'N 80°59'E	2,080	29 October 2006	1	Holt 2008 *
Huayuankou, Zhengzhou, HN	34°53'N 113°40'E	92	23 December 2006	1 F	CBR 2006, 2007
Ebinur Lake, XJ	44°51'N 82°44'E	195	29 October 2007	1	Ma & Mei 2007
Miquan, XJ	44°02'N 87°37'E	530	5–7 November 2007	2	<i>ditto</i>
Dalai Nur, IM	49°00'N 117°23'E	550	24 April 2007	3	Zhao Gerelt 2008 *
Hangzhou Bay, ZJ	30°18'N 120°45'E	0	August 2007	?	Jiang <i>et al.</i> 2011
Danghe Reservoir, GS	39°56'N 94°19'E	1,429	28 October 2007	1 M, 1 F	Li 2009 *
Jing Lake, Deyang, SC	31°07'N 104°23'E	492	31 December 2007	1 F, 1 juv	CBR 2007, 2008
Dazhanhe Reserve, HLJ	48°23'N 127°13'E	420	?	?	Zhang <i>et al.</i> 2009
Qionghai Lake, Xichang, SC	27°51'N 102°16'E	1,511	8 January 2008	1 F	Ye C. Y., pers. comm.
Hangzhou Bay, ZJ	30°18'N 120°45'E	0	January–February 2008	?	Jiang <i>et al.</i> 2011
Mianyang, SC	31°28'N 104°45'E	447	29 February 2008	2	Li B., pers. comm.
Lianyungang, JS	35°04'N 119°21'E	0	28 February 2009	2 F	Lu <i>et al.</i> 2010 *
Dayi, Chengdu, SC	30°36'N 103°10'E	1,150	10 February 2010	1 F	He Y., pers. comm.

(Notes: BJ= Beijing, FJ= Fujian, GD= Guangdong, GS= Gansu, HB= Hebei, HLJ= Heilongjiang, HN= Henan, HuN= Hunan, IM= Inner Mongolia, JS= Jiangsu, LN= Liaoning, QH= Qinghai, SC= Sichuan, SZ= Shenzhen City, XJ= Xinjiang, ZJ= Zhejiang; M= male, F= female, juv= juvenile; CBR 2006, 2007= China Bird Report 2006, 2007; \* = the first record of corresponding provinces, \*\* = specimen preserved at IOZ; '?' = lack of data.)

**Table 2.** Records of Red-breasted Goose *Branta ruficollis* in China

Site	Location	Elevation (m)	Date	Number	Source
Dongting Lake, HuN	29°18'N 112°59'E	15	15 January 1960	1 juv	Cheng 1960 *; No. 38021 **
Dongting Lake, HuN	29°18'N 112°59'E	15	January 1960	1	No. 38022 **
Poyang Lake, JX	29°10'N 116°00'E	12	1992	1	Shi 2000 *
Poyang Lake, JX	29°10'N 116°00'E	12	2004	1	Li <i>et al.</i> 2009
Dongting Lake Wetland, HuN	29°18'N 112°59'E	15	?	?	Zhong <i>et al.</i> 2007
Dachahu, Poyang Lake, JX	29°09'N 116°04'E	9	2005	1	Tu <i>et al.</i> 2009
Hanchihu, Poyang Lake, JX	29°04'N 116°25'E	11	29 December 2006	1	<i>ditto</i>
Fanghu, Poyang Lake, JX	29°49'N 116°31'E	12	29 December 2006	4	<i>ditto</i>
Baiqiang Reservoir, Mengzhou, HN	35°00'N 112°46'E	122	28 January 2007	1	Niu <i>et al.</i> 2008 *
Baiqiang Reservoir, Mengzhou, HN	35°00'N 112°46'E	122	1 January 2008	1 A	<i>ditto</i>
Wolong Lake, Shenyang, LN	42°44'N 123°17'E	88	16–17 October 2008	?	Li <i>et al.</i> 2010 *
Dongting Lake Wetland, HuN	29°31'N 112°47'E	26	8 October 2008	1 A	Wang X. pers. comm.
Shengjin Lake Reserve, AH	30°19'N 117°00'E	9	15 November 2008	1	Cao L. pers. comm. *
Dongting Lake Wetland, HuN	29°29'N 112°48'E	23	24 February 2010	1 A	Wang X. pers. comm.
Shengjin Lake Reserve, AH	31°21'N 117°01'E	10	2 December 2010	1 A	Wang X. pers. comm.
Yazihe Reserve, Guanghan, SC	31°00'N 104°12'E	483	3 January 2011	1 A	Qiu J. & P. Hu *

(Notes: AH= Anhui, HN= Henan, HuN= Hunan, JX= Jiangxi, LN= Liaoning, SC= Sichuan; A= adult, juv= juvenile; \* = the first record of corresponding provinces, \*\* = specimen preserved at IOZ; '?' = lack of data.)

(1960). We believe that the newly discovered specimen was also collected by Guan and his colleagues during the same field trip in January 1960. Combining with these historical records and recent sightings, we speculate that this species might not be a vagrant but rare winter visitor to the lower Yangtze River wetlands. The scarcity of records of this species is probably largely due to lack of observation in this vast area in the past. Undoubtedly, more surveys are needed in future to clarify the status of this endangered species in China.

The avifauna of Sichuan is well known for its rich component of endemics, with 37 of the 71 species, 52%, endemic to China (Zheng 2005, Xu 2008). By contrast waterbirds in Sichuan have been neglected. Few papers focus on this group of birds in Sichuan (e.g. Deng *et al.* 1983, Cui *et al.* 1992, Liu *et al.* 2004). It is remarkable that since 2005 no fewer than three birds new to Sichuan have turned up at this tiny Yazihé Provincial Reserve, Guanghan, which is just 16 km long and covers only 481 ha, the third one being Yellow-billed Loon *Gavia adamsii* on 14 December 2005 (Que & Ran 2006), a species which like Long-tailed Duck is usually found on the sea.

It seems likely that the main reason for this interesting development is that birdwatching is becoming increasingly popular in China. Since 2000, nearly 20 new bird records to China has been added to this country's checklist, more than half of them contributed solely or mainly by birdwatchers (e.g. Holt in CBR 2004 2005, Luo *et al.* 2007, Li *et al.* 2008, Wu *et al.* 2010, Chang *et al.* 2010). Naturally for difficult-to-identify and more threatened species unusual records require solid documentation involving photographs or detailed descriptions.

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- ZHU Lei & SUN Yue-hua**, Key Laboratory of Animal Ecology and Conservation Biology, Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China, Postcode 100101. E-mail: sunyh@ioz.ac.cn
- ZHANG Jun**, Guanghan Bureau of Forestry, Guanghan, China, Postcode 618300
- QIU Jing**, Chengdu Bird Watching Society, Chengdu, China, Postcode 610041
- WEI Qian**, China Bird Watch, Beijing, China, Postcode 100026
- DONG Lei**, College of Art and Communication, Southwest Jiaotong University, Chengdu, China, Postcode 610031

## Western Hoolock *Hoolock hoolock* preying on chicks of Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus* in Lawachara National Park, Bangladesh

DELIP K. DAS

On 3 May 2011 at 12h18–12h33, Indranil Kishor and I observed a group of Western Hoolocks *Hoolock hoolock* being mobbed by two Greater Racket-tailed Drongos *Dicrurus paradiseus* at Lawachara National Park, District Moulavibazar, Bangladesh (24°20'N 91°47'E). The gibbon group consisted of one adult female with infant, one adult male and one unsexed black-coloured juvenile.

I soon noticed that the female Hoolock was holding a half-grown drongo chick in her hand, and that another chick was present in a nest next to her. She was busy eating the flesh of the chick, unconcerned by the strong mobbing of the drongos. After finishing the first chick she took the second chick from the nest. The chick

**Plate 1.** Female Western Hoolock about to take chick from nest of Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus*.



was calling and waving its legs continuously to escape. The female Hoolock inspected the chick for some time, holding it upside down in front of her face, and shaking it a couple of times whilst looking around her, causing the victim's parents to become frantic in their mobbing. She shifted to another branch and again held the chick upside down while it opened its gape to its widest extent. After a while, she bit off the chick's head, ate it, and then started eating the body. The whole event, from picking the live chick from nest to biting off its head, took c.3 minutes; Plates 1–4 illustrate the sequence. While this was happening, I noticed that the adult male gibbon, c.6–8 m distant in another tree, was consuming a third chick, which it

**Plate 2.** Greater Racket-tailed Drongo mobbing the female Hoolock.

